



U.S. ARMY COMBAT READINESS/SAFETY CENTER

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Deadly choices

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Bad decisions, not bad skills, kill more Soldiers on motorcycles than any other cause.

That's according to Lt. Col. Scott Wile, driving director at the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center. Indisciplined riding accounted for more than 56 percent of Army rider fatalities during the first three quarters of fiscal 2012, data that illustrates the stark fact that Soldiers, not other motorists, are frequently their own worst enemy on the road.

Indiscipline goes beyond just motorcycle riding, according to Col. Kevin Christensen, commander of the 110th Aviation Brigade, Fort Rucker, Ala. He believes commanders must be alert to clues in their Soldiers' behavior.

"First, I believe indiscipline — regardless how it is manifested — is a key risk indicator for commanders to consider," he said. "While some might find it hard to make the connection between a traffic violation in a car or non-judicial punishment resulting from an act of indiscipline and unsafe motorcycle riding, I think there is a connection. When Soldiers know what the chain of command expects of them and still go out and ride recklessly, they're demonstrating a lack of judgment."

How does indiscipline manifest itself in Army riders? Accident reports reveal several common themes: speeding, alcohol, lack of personal protective equipment and/or proper training, and out riding ones' skills.

Wile said there are ways to mitigate indiscipline.

"The key to curbing indiscipline lies in leaders at all levels building a safe riding culture in their organizations," he said, referencing the requirements outlined in the new Leader and Rider Roles and Responsibilities pamphlet. "But to support a safe unit culture, Soldiers need to hold each other accountable for their behavior on the road.

"The real-world manifestation of engaged leadership and a safe unit riding culture is relatively simple: know who your riders are and develop disciplined riders who are fully trained; establish a unit-level motorcycle mentorship program; and reinforce individual responsibility for safe riding."

The Leader and Rider Roles and Responsibilities pamphlet, as well as other information on safe riding, is available at <https://safety.army.mil>.